

NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

TODD P. GRAVES

Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs (816) 426-4220 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 Kansas City, MO 64106

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow

JULY 29, 2005

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**UPDATE: PROJECT CEASEFIRE
TWO KC MEN, PLEASANT HILL MAN PLEAD GUILTY
TO ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF FIREARMS, AMMUNITION**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. - Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that two Kansas City, Mo., men and a Pleasant Hill, Mo., man pleaded guilty in federal court today, in separate and unrelated cases, to being felons in possession of firearms and ammunition. Today's guilty pleas, Graves said, are part of Project Ceasefire, the district's ongoing anti-crime initiative.

* Roy J. Benton, 29, of Kansas City, pleaded guilty before U.S. Chief District Judge Dean Whipple this morning to a charge contained in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Nov. 21, 2003, in Kansas City.

By pleading guilty, Benton admitted that he was a felon in possession of a Ruger 9 mm pistol on Oct. 12, 2003. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for any felon to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. Benton has four 1997 criminal felon convictions for trafficking, two 1997 criminal felony convictions for sale of a controlled substance and one 1997 criminal felony conviction for possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance.

Under federal law, Graves said, Benton may be subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years in federal prison without parole, up to life in prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$250,000. Benton is facing a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years because he has three previous felony convictions that are considered serious drug offenses, Graves said.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jess E. Michaelsen. It was investigated by the Blue Springs, Mo., Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

* Travis H. Owens, 39, of Kansas City, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Dean Whipple this morning to a charge contained in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on April 6, 2004, in Kansas City.

By pleading guilty, Owens admitted that he was in possession of 18 rounds of .22-caliber short ammunition and eight rounds of Remington .22-caliber ammunition on Jan. 23, 2004. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for anyone who has been convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. Owens has a 1982 criminal felony conviction for assault.

This case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Stefan C. Hughes. It was investigated by the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

* Aaron J. Fisher, 33, of Pleasant Hill, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Scott O. Wright this morning to a charge contained in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Nov. 4, 2004, in Kansas City.

By pleading guilty, Fisher admitted that he was in possession of a Raven Arms .25-caliber pistol on Aug. 16, 2004. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for anyone who has been convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. Fisher has a previous criminal felony conviction for tampering with a motor vehicle.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christina Y. Tabor. It was investigated by the Pleasant Hill, Mo., Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Project Ceasefire

Project Ceasefire, launched in October 1999, is a cooperative initiative by federal and local law enforcement and the Kansas City Crime Commission that targets for federal prosecution persons who unlawfully use or possess firearms.
